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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6929
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH 4102
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0274
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2325

UNCLAS HANOI 002112

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR H - JREDDY AND CAUSTIN AND EAP/MLS
STATE PASS USAF - LTCOL DAVID KINCAID

E.O. 12985: N/A

TAGS: OTRA VN

SUBJECT: MISSION VIETNAM COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR CODEL HOYER AND
DELEGATION

REF: STATE 166755

¶1. (SBU) Mission Vietnam welcomes and grants country clearance to CODEL Hoyer and delegation to travel to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam from January 2-4, 2007. The purpose of this visit is to discuss bilateral issues with government officials.

¶2. (SBU) Embassy control officer is Political Officer Jane Bocklage. Contact details are as follows:

Office: (84-4) 850-5081
Fax: (84-4) 850-5098
Cell: 090-409-1435
E-mail: bocklageje@state.gov

Consulate General control officer is Deputy Principal Officer Angela Dickey. Contact details are as follows:

Office: (84-8) 822-9433, ext 2204
Fax: (84-8) 822-0617
Cell: (090) 300-4024
E-mail: dickeyar@state.gov

¶3. (SBU) Hotel accommodations in Hanoi have been made at the Daewoo Hotel, 360 Kim Ma Street, tel: (84-4) 831-5000; and in Ho Chi Minh City at the Sheraton Hotel, 88 Dong Khoi Street, tel: (84-8) 827-2828. Transportation has been arranged for arrival, meetings and departures. Embassy Hanoi will provide accommodation exchange upon arrive for the duration of the delegation's stay in Vietnam. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City will provide reverse accommodation exchange upon departure. Schedules will be sent separately when they are confirmed.

¶4. (U) The local currency is the Vietnamese Dong, and the present rate of exchange is approximately D16,050 to \$1. Major hotels also provide accommodation exchange if you wish to obtain local currency (there is a generally fee for cashing Travelers Checks). There are also numerous ATM machines in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, which accept Master Charge, VISA, and Debit cards, but dispense local currency only. USG travelers on official TDY to Hanoi may also use the Embassy cashier service (opens every business day, 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.) for accommodation exchange.

¶5. (SBU) Security Information:

a. (SBU) Vietnamese security personnel may place foreign visitors under surveillance. Hotel rooms, telephone conversations, fax transmissions, and e-mail communications may be monitored, and personal possessions in hotel rooms may be searched.

b. (U) Visitors to Vietnam must exercise appropriate caution and be alert to their surroundings with regard to their personal security.

Cities in Vietnam have the typical crime problems of other large cities throughout the world. Pickpockets and petty crime occur and appear to be increasing; though, violent crimes such as armed robbery are still relatively rare in Vietnam. Drug use is becoming more and more of a problem in Vietnam. The Embassy recommends that travelers use only metered taxis. Traffic in Vietnam can appear chaotic and there is a real threat of being involved in a traffic or pedestrian accident. Pedestrians unaccustomed to walking across the street in Hanoi, HCMC or other Vietnamese cities should be extra cautious.

c. (U) Visitors should also be aware of the State Department's Consular Information sheet for Vietnam and the most recent Worldwide Caution Public Announcements, which are available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>

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